

1 Samuel 11 - Thursday, December 19th, 2013

(1) Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." (2) And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this *condition* I will make *a covenant* with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel."

- Right out of the shoot here in just these first two verses there are a number of valuable life lessons to learn as it relates to our adversary.
- Before we look at them, we first need to understand what's about to go down, with the men of Jabesh wanting a covenant with Nahash.
- It's important to note that the city of Jabesh-Gilead was part of the tribe of Gad, east of the Jordan, and located near the Ammonite border.

- The significance of this is that geographically, they're more vulnerable to attack, which is why they were discouraged in settling on this land.
- We saw this back when the 2½ tribes made an agreement to settle on the other side of the Jordan, and not cross into the Promised Land.
- In other words, these tribes knew full well that settling on this land would in effect geographically position them on the front lines, as it were.

- In addition to their geographical vulnerability, they have the misfortune of being met by an enemy encamped against them with invincibility.
- It's for this reason that they seek to make a pact with the enemy and as such, hope to be spared of what they perceive as inevitable defeat.
- What I find interesting is that their waving the white flag of surrender is met with this pre-condition of having all their right eyes gouged out.

- At first read, this gouging out of the right eye may seem arbitrary, but actually, it's a brilliant strategy on the part of the Ammonite's military.
- Here's why, not only will they be humiliated psychologically, they'll be incapacitated physically, by virtue of their impaired vision defensively.
- More specifically, with only one eye, they have less of a depth of perception, rendering them at a significant disadvantage when attacked.

As one commentator noted, "He who opposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at his enemy with his right eye; he therefore who plucks out that right eye makes men useless in war."

- This begs the question of why wouldn't Nahash have both eyes gouged out like the Philistines did with Samson so as to totally blind them.
- I would suggest the answer is even more shrewd and sinister, such that Nahash wanted to enslave them, which is why he didn't blind them.
- Were he to completely blind them, they would have become of no use to him when it came to working as slaves being in bondage to him.

- Since you probably already know where I'm going with all of this, I'll get right to it, and submit, that this is how Satan seeks to enslave us.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me a bit longer as I attempt to identify some of the Devil's devices that are woven into the fabric of these two verses.
- First and foremost, it important to understand that Nahash is a type of the Devil, as evidenced by his name, which literally means serpent.

- With that understanding, we're now able to proceed with what I'm calling, Seven Successful Strategy's Satan Uses in defeating Christians.

1. We, in our faithless unwillingness, settle for less than what God knows is best by not stepping out in faith to cross our Jordan of obstacles.
2. We, of our own volition, compromise and in so doing, position ourselves in a location that ultimately makes us vulnerable to satanic attack.
3. We, in our vulnerability, having compromised are now more prone to cower, and as such, wrongly assume that our enemy is invincible.
4. We, in our fear and trepidation, are quick to surrender to, and cooperate with, the Devil, who can't make us do anything we don't agree to.
5. We, in our yielding to the enemy, are brought into a blinding, and humiliating bondage to sin becoming enslaved as slaves to that very sin.
6. We, in our bondage to sin, serve the enemy, instead of serving the Lord this because we allowed him to blind us, bind us then, grind us.
7. We, in that enslavement, are rendered useless in battle, by virtue of Satan has successfully defeating us in our inability to fight in battle.

- At the risk of an oversimplification 7 can be reduced to 3, our location spiritually, our trepidation psychologically and our situation physically.
- In other words, when we surrender to Satan, he can then defeat us when we're not in a good place spiritually, psychologically or physically.
- Could this be why Jesus reduced the 10 commandments to 2, the first being, to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength?

Mark 12:30 NIV Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Luke 10:27 NIV He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Matthew 22:37-40 NIV Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

(3) Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if *there is* no one to save us, we will come out to you."

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Nahash would actually let them see if the other tribes would help.
- I am of the belief that Nahash was confident they'd be back after the seven days, because of what happened to them back in Judges 21.
- Namely, when there was a war in Israel between the tribe of Benjamin and the other 11 tribes, Jabesh-Gilead was the only tribe not to help.

Judges 21:8-9 (8) And they said, "What one *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. (9) For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead *was* there.

- The reason I point this out is that Nahash believed that since Jabesh Gilead didn't help the other tribes, the other tribes will not help them.
- In other words, because of their past failures, they wouldn't have future success. Is this not what Nahash, our serpent the Devil does to us?
- This is yet another of his devices, in that he deceives us to think that past failures mean future defeat. But God is the God of 2nd chances.

(4) So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. (5) Now there was Saul, coming behind the herd from the field; and Saul said, "What *troubles* the people, that they weep?" And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. (6) Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused.

- To me, this is textbook righteous anger on the part of Saul, when we're told that once again, the Holy Spirit of God had come "upon" him.
- When he hears what this serpent Nahash wants to do to his fellow Israelites, he decides to come to their aid in spite of what they did prior.
- To Saul's credit, he's to be commended not only helping a tribe who were arguably deemed traitors, but waiting on the Lord to present this.

- Let me explain, it's peculiar at best that Saul hears of this when he's herding livestock in the field and not sitting on a throne in his castle.
- You'll forgive my choice of a contrast, but I believe it speaks to Saul's willingness to simply wait on the Lord to show him what he is to do.
- The reason I say that is Saul could have easily taken it upon himself to promote himself instead of waiting for the Spirit to come upon him.

Psalms 75:6-7 KJV For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. (7) But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

(7) So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen." And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. (8) When he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

- This may seem like it's a little over the top, but it's actually not this because, Saul was making it clear that it would be sin not to go with him.
- Apparently, Saul's message was very clear, because we're told they came with one consent, all three hundred and thirty thousand of them.
- I suppose you could say that there was now a new sheriff in town, and he meant business, which explains why they responded in this way.

F.B. Meyer - "In some such way, as Sir Walter Scott tells us, the old Highland chieftain used to summon the clans for war by the mission of the fiery cross. Killing an animal, kindling a fire, the cross was burnt in the flames, which were quenched in blood, and was sent throughout the land, and every man who saw it was bound to hasten in the field."

(9) And they said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by *the time* the sun is hot, you shall have help.' " Then the messengers came and reported *it* to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad.

- What a gross understatement saying, they were glad when they heard the news that they won't need eye patches now that they have help.
- Be that as it may, I think there's a take away here that we'd be remiss were we not to take note of it, related to our being there for others.
- Especially when our brothers, like Jabesh Gilead, fully expect that they don't deserve to have us be there for them, in their time of need.

(10) Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you." (11) So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

- Couple of thoughts on this, the first of which is, I believe the men of Jabesh are being rightfully shrewd in saying this to the serpent Nahash.
- While I realize this could be seen as a lie if you really think about it they are going to come out to him and he can do whatever seems good.

Henry Morris - "Unfortunately, some modern versions have translated this as 'surrender,' making it seem that the men of Jabesh were lying. Actually, the words were deliberately vague, allowing the ammonites to interpret them in accord with their own wishful thinking."

- The second thought is that it was clearly the Holy Spirit supernaturally giving Saul the military strategy he needed in order to be victorious.
- The point being is that God will always package the ability to do what He's called and commanded us to do, with the how in order to do it.
- It's been said, that it's the "how" of the Holy Spirit, that enables us to do the "what" of the Holy Scriptures, as the "who" of His holy people.

(12) Then the people said to Samuel, "Who *is* he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." (13) But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel." (14) Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." (15) So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

- The chapter comes to an end with Saul once again needing to be commended for what he does or perhaps better said, what he doesn't do.
- Namely, he doesn't put to death those, whom we were told at the end of chapter ten, despised him, and wouldn't accept him as their king.
- It's interesting to note how that the last verse of this chapter is the antithesis of the last verse of the last chapter in that all rejoiced greatly.

- In other words, instead of some rejoicing with Saul, and some despising of Saul, this time we see that all of them were rejoicing with Saul.
- I would suggest that had Saul exacted revenge on his detractors instead of showing them grace, this last verse would read very differently.
- Here's our last take away before we close, God will honor us and bless us, when we love and bless those who despise us, and hate us.

Luke 6:26-28 NIV Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets. (27) "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, (28) bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.